

# Wadebridge Growth and Development Policy Options

## Introduction

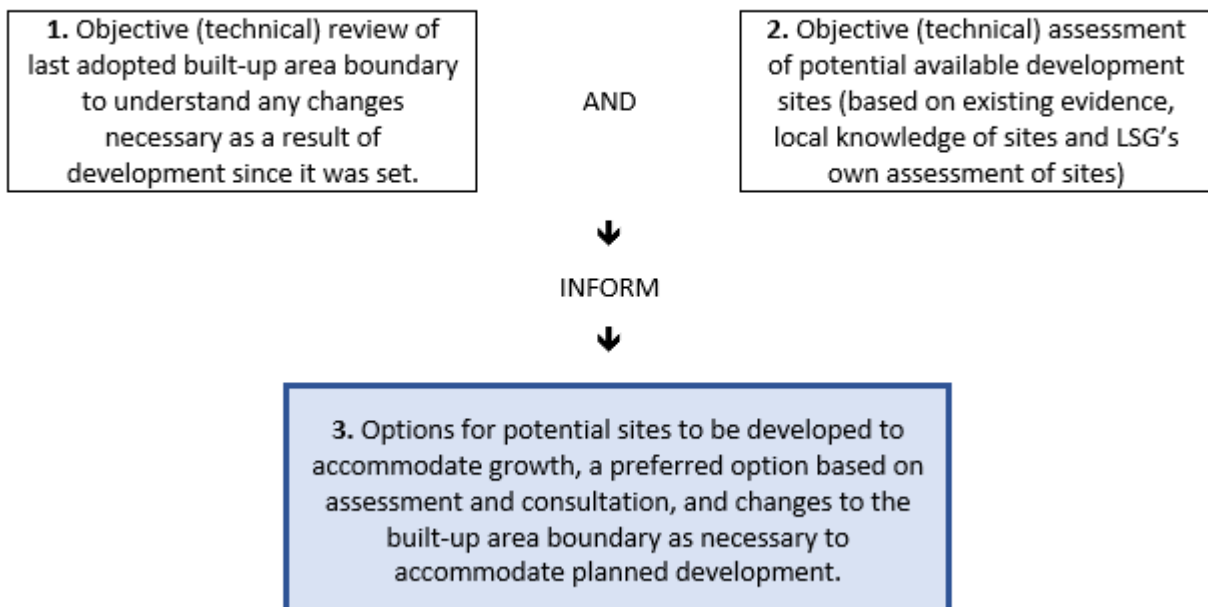
This report brings to a conclusion the work of the Land Supply Group that was set up as a task group by the Egloshayle, St Breock and Wadebridge Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. The task group began its work in early 2014. Its initial remit was to:

- a) *To appraise the suitability of potential development sites (primarily, but not exclusively, housing and employment) in the neighbourhood plan area using recognised technical criteria*
- b) *To collate the appraisal information in appropriate formats (maps and documents) that will assist and support all future neighbourhood plan processes.*

The Neighbourhood Plan can influence where new housing and employment development should take place, the overall scale of which is largely determined by the Cornwall Local Plan. The latest version of the Local Plan requires the Wadebridge area to provide at least 1,100 dwellings between 2010 and 2030. Since 2010, 440 houses have been built or committed by approved planning applications. This leaves a minimum of 660 additional houses to achieve the target during the plan period. The Land Supply Group has considered the implications of this 'target' and devised three different policy approaches to help the Steering Group decide how best the community can exert influence on this scale of future development and thus determine the policy approach to be taken by the Neighbourhood Plan.

The work undertaken by the Land Supply Group is illustrated by the diagram below.

**Figure 1**



This report is highlighted above in blue. It is the third and concluding report produced by the Land Supply Group. Its contents and conclusions are based upon the technical work described in Report 1<sup>1</sup>, a review of recent development and its effect on the built-up area boundary, and Report 2<sup>2</sup>, an assessment of the availability and development potential of various sites in the area (41 sites were subject to an assessment).

<sup>1</sup> Objective (Technical) Review of Built-up Area Boundary, Nov 2016

<sup>2</sup> Objective (Technical) Review of Land Supply for Housing and Employment, Nov 2016

## Context

The Wadebridge area must accommodate in some way the Local Plan strategic target of an additional 1,100 dwellings in the Wadebridge area from 2010 up until 2030 (which means land for a **net 660** dwellings, after taking account of recent completions and outstanding commitments.)

The technical work carried out by the Land Supply Group has enable us to describe the route forward and crystallise the decisions that we are faced with.

The decision-making should start with agreeing a revised BUAB based primarily on current development boundaries

Having agreed the current built-up area boundary, the Steering Group then needs to consider what scale of development it is prepared to support. Specifically, is our neighbourhood planning all about helping meet the Local Plan target or planning for development over and above the minimum. If it is the latter, then we must decide what scale of development is acceptable and appropriate.

There then follow some key neighbourhood plan policy questions:

Should we identify or allocate land to meet our preferred target or do we leave that to Cornwall Council? In this report leaving the allocation process to Cornwall Council is presented as **Policy Option A**.

If we choose to identify or allocate land in the Neighbourhood Plan, we will need to determine what configuration of sites would provide the most beneficial option to deliver the desired scale. If the Steering Group does decide to identify or allocate land, then the technical studies of the Land Supply Group will be invaluable.

This technical work, for instance, has been used to generate two further policy options for the Steering Group to consider. They present two different approaches the Neighbourhood Plan could take, if it was agreed that the Plan should identify areas where development is acceptable (**Policy Option B**) or allocate specific sites (**Policy Option C**).

In the absence of an agreed target growth figure the options we present below are informed largely by our assessment of the availability and developability of sites. We have treated the resultant number of dwelling very much as a consequence of the development strategy.

Regarding employment land, the Wadebridge and Padstow Community Network Area is already over-provided when set against the Local Plan's requirement. The Land Supply Group has recognised however that if sites which had previously been considered as potential employment sites were to receive residential planning consent, there would be very little available development land for employment use in the immediate vicinity of Wadebridge.

The Land Supply Group has been made aware that there are at least two local businesses currently employing around 50 people that are interested in relocating. It would be a significant loss to the town if suitable employment sites were not available for them locally.

The Land Supply Group recommends that the future provision of additional land for employment use should be considered as an integral part of the same policy approach as that taken for major housing development to ensure we continue meet local requirements.

The three policy options we offer for consideration are presented and subjected to analyses in this report.

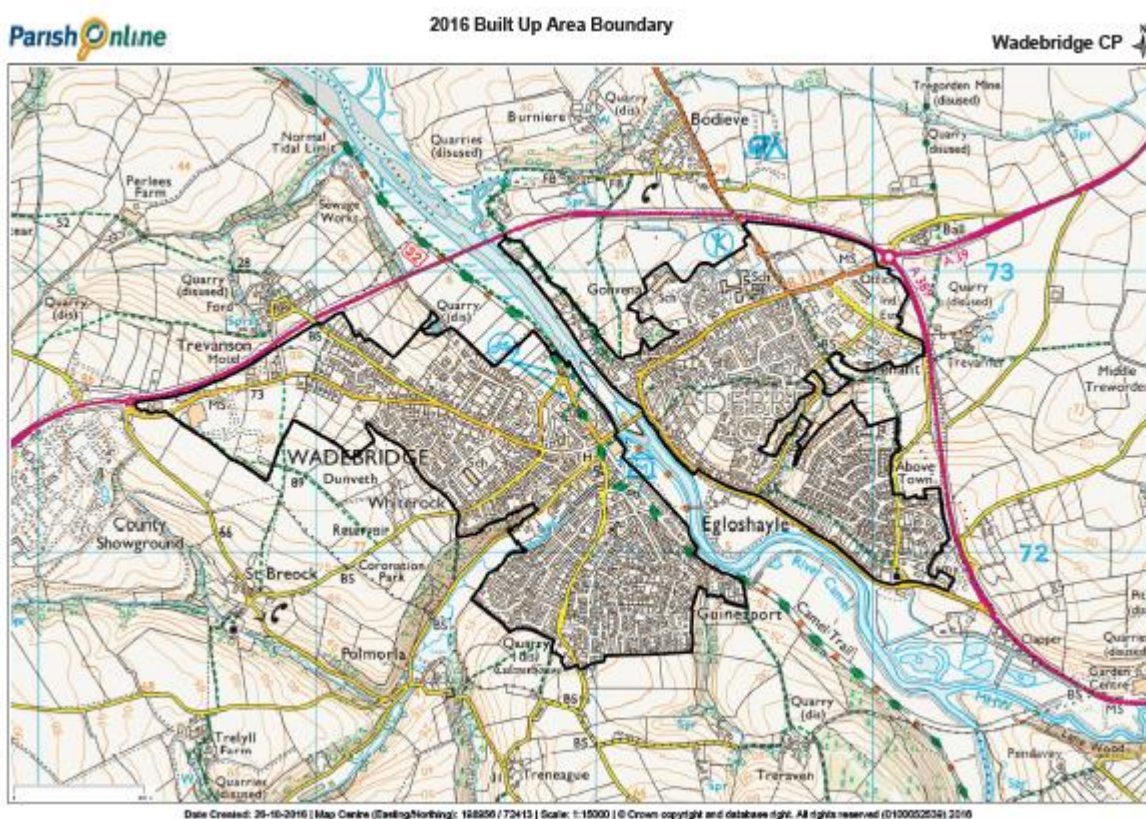
## Policy Options:

### Policy Option A - Up-dated BUAB in line with recent activity with additional site allocation left to CC and the planning process to achieve the Local Plan target and beyond

Option A would not identify sites or areas in the Neighbourhood Plan. It would refer to the Land Supply Group's work in the Plan, suggesting that there are sites we prefer over others. The Plan would identify a BUAB around the existing built area (at 2016) and introduce a criteria-based policy to help ensure that any major development coming forward takes place in appropriate locations in line with the findings of the Land Supply Group's work, for example, development being acceptable in locations contiguous and well-related to the BUAB, avoiding certain constraints and so on.

A revised and more relevant BUAB boundary for Wadebridge has been drawn by the Land Supply Group which takes account of:

- Development that has taken place since 1999 (when the current BUAB was defined by the North Cornwall Local Plan)
- Land with planning permission for development that has not yet been completed, including both developments that have commenced and those yet to start but with an extant planning permission
- Land previously allocated for development that our site assessments show still have development potential, these include Bodieve Park football ground, the former Sainsbury's site at Higher Trenant and land at Trevanson.



The map above shows what we would contend is the current 'technical boundary', which may be appropriate to use as a policy device for the Neighbourhood Plan.

This policy option would leave the allocation of sites to the process being led by Cornwall Council, but our technical work will inform that process and, we hope, would result in the allocation of the sites we favour. Leaving the allocation process to Cornwall Council, it can be argued, would be positive in terms of time and resources and may avoid us having to take difficult choices or achieving a consensus between the partners or between the community at large.

## Issues

- There is no guarantee that sites with extant permission but not yet started will be developed
- National policy is now more relaxed about development outside but adjoining the BUAB; therefore, there would be only limited control over where and how development takes place
- Control is more in the hands of the developer; and decision-making is more in the hands of the local planning authority

### **Policy Option B – *Indicate support for development within a described area (inside the by-pass), ensuring sufficient land is made available to at least meet the Local Plan target***

Option B is more about Identifying land indicatively in the Neighbourhood Plan (starting with any site within the revised 1999 Built Up Area Boundary). We could then identify in the Plan, in an illustrative way and without identifying field boundaries, areas outside the revised 1999 Built Up Area Boundary where we would prefer to see development take place, referring to the Land Supply Group's reports as evidence. This would mean that we would leave the actual allocation of sites to the process being led by Cornwall Council but our work will inform that process and we would hope it results in allocation of the sites we favour. We could go as far drawing a revised BUAB around these indicative sites, using the by-pass as a boundary, perhaps. This however introduces an element of risk i.e. that the sites we prefer and which we indicate are within a revised BUAB may not be those which are allocated by Cornwall Council (and this could lead to development at a scale above that set out in the Local Plan).

We are confident that the further number of dwellings required to meet the Local Plan target, beyond those already built or under construction or with planning consent, can be accommodated within the Wadebridge and Egloshayle by-passes. The sites the Land Supply Group have assessed as being potentially developable within such a revised BUAB are relatively close to the town centre, schools and, with improvements to the road structure, will have good access to the road network leading away from Wadebridge. There are issues however.

Land at Gonvena was designated as an Outstanding Area of Landscape Significance in the 1999 North Cornwall District Council Local Plan. However, it was identified as being suitable for development in the 2012 Wadebridge Town Framework study and scores highly in the 2016 SHLAA<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, the development of land off West Hill, designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, potentially negates the importance of the landscape designation in planning terms.

## Other Issues

Traffic! An application to develop 204 dwellings at Trevarner was refused in June 2016 as it would "further increase traffic congestion on the road network, specifically at the junction of Bodieve Road/Gonvena Hill/St Matthews Hill". Current access to much of the developable land within the bypass and to the east of the River Camel is via the mini-roundabout at the junction of Gonvena Hill/St Matthews Hill and Bodieve Road. If these sites are deemed not developable because of the traffic problems at the mini-roundabout then the Local Plan target may not be achievable, unless satisfactory alternative access arrangements can be made.

### **Policy Option C - *BUAB remains within bypass + specified sites outside the by-pass are allocated to meet a growth target which could go beyond the Local Plan target***

Option C allocates preferred sites. The Neighbourhood Plan can allocate housing sites. The Land Supply Group's work has demonstrated that there is an array of sites that can accommodate whatever scale is required and we have the evidence to demonstrate preference of one site over another. Allocating sites in the Neighbourhood Plan would give us certainty over sites coming forward and we could draw a revised BUAB around these allocations. However, it would mean that our Plan would have to be subject

---

<sup>3</sup> SHLAA = Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), which will mean additional time and resources are needed to finalise the Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy Option C would likely involve allocating land for development outside of the by-pass, off Ball roundabout and near Bodieve. This acknowledges the fact that land in this location is already being ‘looked at’ by developers. A planning pre-application for a sizeable development has recently been made.

The response from County Highways to the pre-application is generally favourable to the proposal because of the wider impact a new access road could have. Developing land off Ball Roundabout could facilitate a route for a Bodieve Road relief road, which would also unlock the development sites at Trevarner and Gonvena. It would also provide an improved access to the Bodieve settlement, although this may result in it losing its sense of separation.

#### Other Issues:

Allocating sites outside of the Wadebridge and Egloshayle by-passes reduces the significance of the by-pass as a limit/barrier to expansion. This option could well invite further development proposals beyond the by-pass.

Although close to the Primary Academy and Wadebridge School, and in a good location to access the wider road network, this area is not within walking distance of the town centre. It is clear from the planning officer’s comments in response to the recent planning pre-application that *‘given its scale, separation from the built form of Wadebridge, and proximity to an existing residential area of Bodieve and campsite’* development here would be more about creating a new and separate community, which, to be sustainable, *“would require the incorporation of a local newsagent / public house / community space / school / employment opportunities within the proposals.....to forge a sense of cohesion and community and help to reduce some vehicle trips”*.

### Options Appraisal

To aid the Steering Group in coming to a decision as to the route to take, we offer the following analyses.

#### A. Impact Assessment:

The analysis below is based on the likely impact of the policy option on key factors. This ‘impact assessment’, although in a simple form, is akin to a sustainability appraisal.

Options:	A	B	C
Strategic Target	The CC will ensure the target is met. The target can easily be adjusted during the Plan period.	Sufficient land has been assessed as being available but there is little in the way of contingency apart from Gonvena	Sufficient land will be allocated to ensure the target can be met and it is clear where the growth will take place
Growth	The scale should be in accordance with the LP	The scale should be in accordance with the LP although it could be up to +30% if Gonvena is developed	Could be up to +50% above LP target
Environmental Impact	Uncertain – although plan policies should serve to control and mitigate	Constrained within the by-pass area, although it could be significant if Gonvena is developed	Significant and would require a mitigation strategy
Community Infrastructure	Unpredictable impact – that would need to be planned for	Would make best use of existing infrastructure but there could be capacity issues to deal with	Would necessitate new community facilities that must be planned for
Highways and Traffic	Uncertain	Could put additional pressure of road network	Could justify new roads that would alleviate pressure on existing network

Sustainable Travel	Need to put a sustainable travel in place	More likely to be achievable, as growth is kept close to existing urban area	More difficult to impose on developments out of town, with new roads and good connection to main highway network
Economic Impact	LP is aiming for “balanced approach that achieves economic growth in line with population growth	Should have positive impact on the town	More investment, more people, more demand but will it be in Wadebridge or elsewhere?
Housing Need	Will meet need as assessed by LP and subject to affordable housing policy	Same as option A Site near town may serve to meet needs better	Site allocation can be more specific about meeting local need
Community Cohesion	Uncertain	More likely	Less likely
Overall Sustainability	Probably, if CC is able to exercise control	More likely	Less likely
Impact on Heritage	Uncertain but could be planned for	Should be limited as most sites are edge of town	Could have negative impact on Bodieve and town setting
Tourism	Uncertain but should be taken into account	Traffic issues could deter visitors	Character of market town may be at risk

Based on this impact analysis we have ranked the policy options. Because of the degree of subjectivity involved in the analysis, we have purposely kept the ranking system simple; where 1 is best, 2 is second best and 3 is third best. The ranking numbers have been totalled to arrive at a cumulative ‘score’ of each policy option. These should be interpreted therefore as the lowest ‘score’ being the best option per that analysis.

<b>Options:</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
Strategic Target	2	3	1
Growth	1	2	3
Environmental Impact	2	1	3
Community Infrastructure	2	1	3
Highways and Traffic	2	3	1
Sustainable Travel	2	1	3
Economic Impact	3	2	1
Housing Need	2	1	3
Community Cohesion	2	1	3
Sustainability	2	1	3
Impact on Heritage	2	1	3
Tourism	1	2	3
	<b>23</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>30</b>

There are, of course, other ways to analyse the options. We have compared the three policy options in other ways considered to be of relevance. We hope that this may stimulate discussion but, perhaps, make the choice easier for the Steering Group. We have used the same ranking and scoring system for each analysis.

## B. Plan-making:

We have been mindful of the Steering Group's view about the role of the Neighbourhood Plan in influencing development and growth. The analysis below considers the policy options against criteria, which reflect the Steering Group's predilections.

<b>Options:</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
Certainty	3	2	1
Harmony	1	2	3
Simplicity	1	2	3
Flexibility	1	3	2
Deliverability	1	2	3
Controllability	3	2	1
	<b>10</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>

## C. Neighbourhood Plan Policies:

The third analysis we thought it worthwhile applying was one that tested the impact that the policy options could have on the other draft policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. This is a legitimate 'test' given that all other policies in the draft Plan have already been reviewed and agreed by the Steering Group. For this analysis, we have used a zero where we think that all options will have no effect on the draft policy.

<b>Options:</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	
SD1 Built-up Area Boundary	0	0	0	<i>Options should inform policy</i>
SD2 Development Outside the BUAB	2	1	3	<i>Limits dev. outside BUAB</i>
SD3 Character	1	2	3	<i>Respects local character</i>
SD4 Employment Growth	2	3	1	<i>Land NW of Ball Rd Roundabout</i>
NE1 Protection of the Natural Environment	1	3	2	<i>Minimises impact</i>
NE2 Areas of Ecological Significance	3	1	2	<i>Avoids areas</i>
NE3 Protection of Landscape Character	2	1	3	<i>Protects character of rural areas</i>
NE4 Nesting Boxes	0	0	0	<i>No discernible difference</i>
NE5 Wildlife Corridors	1	2	3	<i>Protect existing corridors</i>
NE6 Camel Trail	0	0	0	<i>No discernible difference</i>
NE7 Local Green Space	0	0	0	<i>No discernible difference</i>
JE1 Existing Business	0	0	0	<i>No discernible difference</i>
JE2 New Employment Opportunities	2	1	3	<i>New businesses within BUAB</i>
JE3 Farm Business Diversification	0	0	0	<i>No discernible difference</i>
TR1 Town Centre Development	2	1	3	<i>Increase use and vitality of TC</i>
TR2 Major Retail Development Outside of the Town Centre	2	1	3	<i>Avoids larger retail outside TC</i>
TR3 Pedestrian Priority in the Town Centre	2	1	3	<i>Extends pedestrianisation in TC</i>
HO1 Meeting Local Housing Need	2	1	3	<i>Housing for local needs</i>
HO2 Retaining Affordable Housing Stock	0	0	0	<i>No discernible difference</i>
HO3 Infill Housing Development	1	2	3	<i>Encourage infill development</i>
HO4 Innovative Housing Solutions	0	0	0	<i>No discernible difference</i>
HO5 Layout and Design	1	2	3	<i>Variety in design</i>
HO6 Self Build Dwellings	3	2	1	<i>Self-build plots</i>
HO7 District Heating Schemes	3	2	1	<i>Scale suitable for district heating</i>
RE1 Micro Energy Generation	0	0	0	<i>No discernible difference</i>
RE2 Solar Arrays	2	3	1	<i>Small and medium arrays</i>
RE3 Small-scale Wind Turbines	1	2	3	<i>Appropriate locations</i>
RE4 Large-scale Wind Turbines	2	3	1	<i>Scale, demand and location</i>
RE5 Visual Impact of Wind Turbines	2	3	1	<i>Relates to RE4</i>
RE6 Community Energy Projects	0	0	0	<i>No discernible difference</i>
TT1 Impact of Traffic	2	3	1	<i>Avoids adding to current issues</i>
TT2 Trenant Vale	2	1	3	<i>Requires improvements to TV</i>
TT3 Town Centre Parking	0	0	0	<i>No discernible difference</i>
TT4 Safe Cycle and Pedestrian Links	3	1	2	<i>Safe links to TC and facilities</i>

TT5 Local Shopping	3	2	1	<i>Local convenience store</i>
TT6 Pedestrian and Cycle Priority in Town Centre	3	2	1	<i>Take traffic away from TC</i>
AC1 Art in the Public Realm	2	1	3	<i>Public art opportunities</i>
AC2 Centre for Arts and Cultural Activity	3	2	1	<i>Demand for centre</i>
SR1 Protecting Public Open Space	1	3	2	<i>Avoids recreation areas</i>
SR2 Promoting Tourism	2	1	3	<i>Attracts tourists</i>
SR3 New Recreation Facilities	2	1	3	<i>Specific recreation facilities</i>
SR4 Sports Facilities	2	3	1	<i>New sports facilities</i>
SR5 Trevilling Quay	3	1	2	<i>Local demand for new mixed use</i>
SR6 Local Footpaths	2	1	3	<i>Add to footpath network</i>
SR7 Recreation and Tourism Outside the BUAB	2	3	1	<i>Recreation outside BUAB</i>
CI1 Infrastructure Requirements	3	2	1	<i>Developer contributions</i>
CI2 Community Facilities	0	0	0	<i>No discernible difference</i>
	<b>72</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>74</b>	

## Conclusion

We are not making a recommendation. We would just point out that based on the above analyses:

*Policy Option A* - seems to be the simplest to convert into an agreed policy statement(s) and would allow us to proceed to the next stages of neighbourhood planning; but it offers the least community control over the location of future development and its impact

*Policy Option B* – would exert influence and may deliver the most sustainable and desirable outcome for the community, if the highways issues can be resolved

*Policy Option C* - could have the greatest impact on the future of the area and may bring about significant improvements but at what cost and when?